



SOCIAL INNOVATION FUND

GRANTEE CONVENING

Innovation. Evidence. Impact.

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Jobs for the Future's Opportunity Works SIF



Jobs for the Future



Our Mission

Jobs for the Future (JFF) works to ensure that all lower-income young people and workers have the skills and credentials needed to succeed in our economy.



Our Vision

The promise of education and economic mobility in America is achieved for everyone.





About the Population

- Opportunity youth: 5 million young people disconnected from school and work
- Few on-ramps back into education and training programs that lead to good jobs with career advancement
- Wasted talent for the country and for the youth themselves
- Lack of evidence base for what works





Opportunity Works SIF

- Boston, Hartford, New Orleans, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Santa Clara, South King County
- JFFs Back on Track interventions:
 - Enriched Preparation for those without a HS credential
 - Postsecondary/Career Bridging for those with a HS credential





Back on Track: Postsecondary Success

- Enriched Preparation:
 - College-going and Career-ready Culture
 - College-going and Career-ready Curriculum and Instruction
 - Personalized Guidance and Support
- Postsecondary/Career Bridging:
 - College Knowledge and Success
 - Personalized Guidance and Connection to Best Bets





Opportunity Works Progress

- Currently entering third year of three-year project
- 2,000 served
- Scale strategies in process
- Implementation evaluation completed
- Impact evaluation under way by Urban Institute (3 sites)





Scale Strategies

- Embed Back on Track into additional schools and programs in the community that are not currently part of the initiative
- Spread the Back on Track interventions into nearby high-need cities with significant numbers of opportunity youth
- Expand the number of sites delivering the Back on Track interventions, with the same program providers at the core
- Expand access to additional opportunity youth
- Expand staff capacity to support increased numbers of youth served in Back on Track programs





Implementation Evaluation Findings: BOT Model

- OW sites adapted the Back on Track model to their local resources and context; they have all or nearly all of the model elements and often go beyond the requirements of the model
- Difficult to have strong Postsecondary Bridging without strong Enriched Preparation
- Challenging to promote strong Enriched Prep model without also offering Postsecondary Bridging
- Need to build in redundancies





Lessons from Implementation Evaluation: Partners

- Select partners carefully and clarify roles
- Hold partner meetings to build trust
- Building data culture is iterative and interactive; requires:
 - clarity of roles across partners
 - training of partners on data capture and use
- Work through alignment of programming components early on across partners
- Strong technical support from national partner especially useful at beginning





Lessons from Implementation Evaluation: Recruitment & Retention

- Outreach and recruitment methods vary across sites and reflect variations in disconnection of the youth
- Regardless of the approach, sites should anticipate and plan for recruitment challenges
- Sites use range of strategies to improve retention of youth including frequent contact with youth, relationship-building, and monetary incentives.





Implementation Evaluation Findings: Youth Feedback

- Youth expressed the importance of:
 - relatable and caring staff
 - being held to high expectations
 - having peer support networks
 - having a voice in program design
 - a safe place with sufficient space
- Build in earning opportunities for youth; challenge is how to do that while they pursue credentials





Implementation Evaluation Findings: Staffing

- BOT is personnel-intensive; need to have staff who are relatable, have high expectations for youth, understand their backgrounds and demonstrate they care
- Establishing relationships takes time – account for that in model
- Think carefully about staff-to-student ration





Lessons from Implementation Evaluation Findings: Funding

- In all sites, the bulk of funds support staff positions; intentional efforts to hire staff whose backgrounds make them more relatable to youth
- Limited funds require sites to trade-off funding staff at levels to individualize educational supports or supporting services that meet the basic needs of youth





Impact evaluation

- Quasi-experimental design using propensity score matching
- Treatment and comparison groups complete surveys that address a range of features to allow matching of participants
- Survey results show similarities between groups on many baseline characteristics even before matching
- Early results from SKC “treatment” group:
 - 45% of students in postsecondary bridging already enrolled in college
 - 76% of those have persisted to a second year





Next Steps

- Implement scale strategies
- Complete impact evaluation
- Raise final match

